

SUPERMARKET SHOPPING

Your supermarket shop is the easiest way to save without having to go without anything you need or that's important. Households throw away up to a third of their groceries unused and one reason is that supermarkets are designed to entice us to buy more than we want and to spend more than we intended.

- ◆ Write a shopping list before each shopping trip. Include everything you need and want that's important to you and your family. It will keep you stay in control of your decisions when you're tempted by something extra.
- ◆ Don't go shopping when you're tired or hungry because you're more vulnerable to buying extra or unimportant things.
- ◆ Don't take children. Not only can they be a distraction but supermarkets advertise things at their eye-level, in the hope they will nag you for them.
- ◆ Remember that the usual brands are on the shelves at eye-level and the cheaper alternatives on lower shelves.
- ◆ Think carefully about special offers. Do you really want two of something just because they're cheap — especially when you didn't want one to begin with? Is it worth paying a bit extra to get 'three for the price of two' if you're going to use only one of them and end up throwing away the other two?

SOME TRUTHS ABOUT MONEY

- ◆ It's not more important than people.
- ◆ It can't buy you love.
- ◆ It's not more important than your reputation.
- ◆ You can't take it with you when you die.

CLUBHOUSE MONEY-ED

All Souls Clubhouse produce literature and run courses to help people handle money well. Check out the website for free downloads:

www.clubhousew1.org/moneyed

THIS LEAFLET DOES NOT SAY IT ALL

This is only an introduction to personal financial issues and they have been simplified. Managing money and resolving debt can be complicated. You cannot hold Clubhouse, the author, or anyone else involved in the production of this leaflet responsible for any action you take, or fail to take, based on what is written here. You should get expert help if you are worried about your financial situation or if you think you could benefit from help with money problems and debt.

WHERE TO GET FREE ADVICE

If you have a money problem or debt, get immediate help. You will find local advice agencies listed in the front of telephone directories or on display in local libraries. Or you can call National Debtline on **0808 808 4000**: the call is free from landlines and most mobile network. Or look on these websites:

www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

adviceuk.org.uk

www.gracedebtadvice.org

www.capuk.org

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CLUBHOUSE MONEY-ED PROJECT

All Souls Clubhouse Community Centre & Church

MAKING ENDS MEET



living on a low
income

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NEVER ENOUGH?

One of the hardest things about living in a consumer society is to be satisfied with enough. We're constantly pressurised into spending by marketing designed to make us feel inadequate and insecure, so we buy what we think we deserve or will make us feel better. Things like new clothes, cosmetics, gadgets and entertainment. These aren't 'real' needs and we can end up spending money on what we don't need and didn't previously want.

As money is central to the way we live, handling it well improves our chances of living how we choose. Handling it badly not only limits our options and opportunities but damages our relationships and impairs our ability to work and study well.

You can't begin to make ends meet unless you understand where your money goes. This is impossible to guess. The only reliable thing to do is track your spending. This means writing down every penny you spend — every rent payment, electricity top-up, supermarket shop, snack, magazine and bus ride. Then, once a week look at what you've spent and think about whether it you bought important things.

You can spend money only once. If you use what you have on stuff that isn't important, you can't use it to buy what you really need and like!

GETTING A GRIP

The only way to control money is to budget: there really is no other option. A budget is a plan of where your money comes from and where it has to go. So, first, work out How much you get: wages (including bonuses) and Benefits.

Should you budget for a week or month at a time? The period is set by the frequency of your main income. If you're paid monthly, budget for each month; if weekly, budget for a week. If your Benefits are paid every two weeks, budget for a fortnight.

Organise your spending into three groups.

- ◆ **Survival costs.** These are the things you can't avoid paying for, like rent, council tax, electricity, food, household goods, clothes, hygiene and essential travel.
- ◆ **Lifestyle choices.** These aren't essential but make life more pleasant. They include the sorts of clothes and fashion accessories that express who you are, entertainment and leisure activities.
- ◆ **Impulse spending.** These are what you buy on the spur of the moment, without really thinking about them, like chocolate bars, coffee, magazines.

Now examine each spending group to see if you can cut down without giving up anything you or your family would really miss.

- ◆ **Minimise survival costs.** You can't avoid these costs but you can reduce what you spend on most of them. If you turn down the central heating by a degree or two, and shorten the time it's on by ten minutes a day, you can make a noticeable saving. Shopping around can save you a lot on food.
- ◆ **Prioritise lifestyle choices.** You can't afford to have and do it all, so make sure you do what's important to you.
- ◆ **Cap impulse spending.** If something isn't important enough for you to include in your budget, don't buy it!

Keep refining your budget, until you spend less than you get. If you can't achieve that, get expert help.

FALSE GUILT

Marketing tries to make us discontent and dissatisfied but this is false guilt. Reject these feelings.

- ◆ That you're less significant as a person for not having certain things, enjoying entertainments or going places.
- ◆ That you're less of a parent because your children don't have the same things their friends have.
- ◆ That your family would be happier or your home better if you had the stuff you see on tv.